

have concluded that this tax cut plan will increase the Federal budget deficit. And they are right, because we will now have to increase our debt limit \$894 billion.

Mr. Speaker, the American people have got it right, because they have common sense. In the midst of this situation, we ought to create jobs, not debt. In the midst of this situation, we ought to be favoring working people, not just the wealthy.

The American people have got it right; and I will tell you, they are not buying this used car from this President.

CIVIL SERVICE REFORMS: REINSTATING A WORKERS' BILL OF RIGHTS

(Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in frustration over the Committee on Rules' failure to allow the Cooper Civil Service Bill of Rights to be offered today as an amendment to the defense authorization bill.

On the day that Congress left for the Easter recess, the Department of Defense presented Congress with the largest civil service reform package in nearly half a century. Impacting nearly 620,000 Department of Defense civilian employees, the proposed bill strips workers of fundamental protections, including the right to collective bargaining and the right to belong to a union without fear of discrimination. In fact, it does not even guarantee overtime pay for firefighters.

Although I agree that the Department of Defense civil service reforms are necessary, the manner in which these reforms have been moving through this body is disgraceful.

Congress is doing a disservice to our hard-working men and women at the Department of Defense by failing to bring this issue up for a debate. The Cooper amendment would have restored, among many things, critical worker protections, including veterans' preferences, freedom from political patronage, collective bargaining rights, membership in labor organizations, and protection from discrimination.

Mr. Speaker, the leadership in this body has failed our Department of Defense employees.

BURDENS BEING PLACED ON BACK OF VETERANS

(Mr. STRICKLAND asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. STRICKLAND. Mr. Speaker, as we approach the Memorial Day weekend, I think it is important for the veterans across this country to understand what this body is doing. We are placing additional burdens on the

backs of our veterans for the health care they receive through the VA system in order to give a larger, more generous tax cut to the richest people in this country, many of whom have never served this country in the military.

Why do I say that? We passed a budget in this House supported by the President that asked for a \$250 annual enrollment fee so that many of our veterans will be able to participate in the VA health care system. If they do not pay the enrollment fee, they cannot participate.

The President has asked for an increase in the co-payment for prescription drugs from \$7 to \$15 a prescription. They have placed a gag order on their health care providers, saying they can no longer actively inform veterans of the benefits they are legally entitled to receive.

So here is what we have: a decision by the President and the Congress to put an additional financial burden on the backs of our veterans so that we can give a more generous tax cut to the richest people in this country. It is wrong.

PROPOSED TAX PLAN KILLING JOBS

(Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, Members of the House, 2 years ago President Bush brought a \$1 trillion tax cut to the American public in the name of creating jobs and stimulating the economy. Since the time that he has done that, the economy has lost 2.7 million jobs; 2.7 million Americans out of work, the deficit has soared dramatically, and the economy is moving sideways, at best.

Now what does the President suggest? Today he suggests we cut taxes again, another \$1 trillion, and that \$1 trillion is supposed to create jobs. Very shortly President Bush will reign over the loss of 3 million jobs since he has come to office.

The President keeps putting forth this plan as a means of creating jobs. What it has done is it has killed 3 million jobs. The President's economic plan has yet to create its first job, its first job; but it has killed 3 million jobs in the American economy. The American public ought to understand, it is a \$1 trillion giveaway to the richest people in the country and a job killer for working Americans.

APPOINTMENT OF CONFEREES ON H.R. 2, JOBS AND GROWTH RECONCILIATION TAX ACT OF 2003

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take from the Speaker's table the bill (H.R. 2) to provide for reconciliation pursuant to section 201 of the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2004, with a

Senate amendment thereto, disagree to the Senate amendment, and agree to the conference asked by the Senate.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

MOTION TO INSTRUCT OFFERED BY MR. STENHOLM

Mr. STENHOLM. Mr. Speaker, I offer a motion to instruct conferees.

The Clerk read as follows:

Mr. STENHOLM moves that the managers on the part of the House at the conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the Senate amendment to the bill H.R. 2 be instructed—

(1) to include in the conference report the fiscal relief provided to States by section 371 of the Senate amendment, and

(2) to the maximum extent possible within the scope of conference agree to a conference report that will neither increase the Federal budget deficit nor increase the amount of the debt subject to the public debt limit.

□ 1030

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LATOURETTE). The gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM) and the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS) each will be recognized for 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM).

Mr. STENHOLM. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, in his State of the Union address, the President told us this country has many problems, and that we will not deny, we will not ignore, we will not pass along our problems to other Congresses, other presidents, and to other generations.

As a proud grandfather who wants to leave a better future for my grandchildren, I applauded that statement; and I applaud it today. Unfortunately, our current budget, our current economic game plan, our current budget policies, would do precisely what we all applauded we should not do. Every dollar of the tax cuts passed by the Senate will be added to our \$6.4 trillion debt.

At the same time, we are debating another round of tax cuts, the leadership of this House is trying to slip through an increase in our debt limit of nearly \$1 trillion, the largest increase in the history of our country. Our total debt in this country in 1979 was less than the amount that we will borrow in a period of less than 2 years. That is what we are objecting to in this motion to instruct conferees.

I do not oppose tax cuts. In fact, I have stood with my fellow Blue Dogs and an overwhelming majority of this side of the aisle, and a few from that side of the aisle, and voted this year to do the tax cuts on the marriage tax penalty, to do the child tax credit speed-up. But our budget, our bill, did not borrow the money to do it.